

EMOTIONAL LABOR, PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND JOB OUTCOMES

Dr. Rabindra Kumar Pradhan*
Auiditi Pramanik**

[Present competitive market largely depends on the interaction between service providers and customers to make a strong service brand. Effective interaction involves display of appropriate emotions according to the job requirements. The process of showing appropriate emotions frequently demands suppression of genuine emotions or even expressing fake emotions. Such conscious effort of regulating emotions according to the job demands is termed as emotional labor. The two major strategies for emotional labor are surface acting and deep acting. Employees do this by following certain display rules. Emotional labor is associated with job satisfaction, better physical health and psychological well being. Conscious display of artificial emotion sometimes causes long-lasting stress may damage physical well being, thus it becomes important to manage it. The present paper is an attempt to discuss the concept, antecedents, consequences, and implications of emotional labor.]

Keywords: *Emotional labor, physical health, psychological well being, stress, surface acting, deep acting, display rules.]*

*Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India

**Research Scholar

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India

Introduction

In modern competitive market the interaction between service providers and customers play important role to make a strong service brand. In the service industry, being friendly and kind to people is a value added part of the product that employee provides (Schneider & Bowen, 1985). It is evident that positive emotional displays like friendliness, cheerfulness, affection, compassion and warmth have positive impacts on customers, which create customer satisfaction. Therefore most of the organization gives emphasis to display appropriate emotions among their employees while dealing with customers. But as a part of effective display of emotions it is very essential for the employees to regulate their emotions effectively, which frequently demands suppression of genuine emotions or even expressing fake emotions. The effort involved in doing so is termed as 'emotional labor'. In simple words, emotional labor refers to the regulation of emotion according to the job demand. If the emotional labor is too high it might exhaust an employee emotionally and result in serious consequences like burnout (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Botheridge & Grandey, 2002). Thus, the role of emotional labor and its management becomes evident in service industry. The present paper is an attempt to discuss the concept,

antecedents, consequences, and implications of emotional labor.

The term emotional labor was first coined by sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983) in her book 'The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human of Feeling' as "the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display to keep up with job requirements". Emotional labor possesses the following characteristics: (a) face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with others; (b) the display of emotions to influence other people's emotions, attitudes, and behaviours; and (c) the display of emotions following certain predetermined rules (Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1997; Zapf, 2002). Effective employee-customer interactions are essential for product delivery in service job roles. Most managers assume that the displays of appropriate emotions are strongly related to customer satisfaction and increase customer commitment, loyalty, and therefore, reach organizational goals (Albrecht & Zemke, 1985; Bowen, Seihl, & Schneider, 1989). If an employee is ill behaved to a customer, it will leave a bad impression about the company in the customer's mind. Second, the nature of service like the intangibility, heterogeneity, variability, and inseparability, makes the interaction between the service providers and the

customers a critical component in determining customers' perceptions of service quality (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Bowen et al., 1989). These factors indicate the importance of appropriate emotional display or emotional labor on customers' perceptions of product quality, both of goods and services.

A number of researchers have tried to explore the nature and dimensions of emotional labor. Morris and Feldman in 1996 stated that emotional labor has four dimensions, namely frequency of interactions, attentiveness to display rules, variety of motional expressions, and emotional dissonance. Later they revised and noted three sub-constructs as frequency, duration, and dissonance (Morris & Feldman, 1997). Recently Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) made an effort to integrate previous all dimensions of emotional labor and narrowed them into two categories. They are job-focused emotional labor, which means emotional demands inherited in the occupation. This involves the frequency, duration, variety and intensity of emotional labor and display rules. The later is named as employee-focused emotional labor, which refers to the ability of managing emotions at work. This approach examines emotional labor in terms of individual's emotion regulation processes which involves modifying emotional expression

to meet work demands and deal with the emotional dissonance (i.e. conflict between emotional expression and inner feelings) (Grandy, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1997; Pugliesi, 1999).

Researchers have also noted a number of strategies to express unfelt emotion considered as strategies of emotional labor (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Hochschild, 1983). According to Hochschild emotional labor takes place in two ways, surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting (SA) means modification of external emotional display. Here inner emotional feeling and outward display of emotions are different from each other. In other words, employee hide felt emotions or fake unfelt emotions. Hence, SA is termed as "faking in bad faith" (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Thus, SA usually involves faking positive emotions and sometimes suppressing negative felt emotions, so that positive displays will follow. It is evident that good customer dealing includes positive expressions like happy mood, smiling face, friendly attitude, etc. from service agents. On the other hand, deep acting (DA) refers to the internal modification of emotions so that the external expression of emotions looks very genuine and authentic towards others. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) referred to this act as "faking in good faith"

because employees' intent is to seem authentic to the audience. Thus deep acting involves changing inner feelings by altering something more than outward appearance. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that naturally felt emotions become emotional labor when individuals have to put forth conscious effort to ensure that their displayed emotional coincide with their expected emotional display. However, there is no published research evidence in support of this phenomenon that display of naturally felt emotion is an emotional labor strategy. Diefendorff and colleagues (2005) suggest that surface acting involves going through the emotions, whereas, deep acting involves experiencing the emotion. Consequently, surface acting requires less effort than deep acting. That's why surface acting seems to be adopted by employees quite frequently. Thus, surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA) may be considered compensatory strategies that individuals use when they cannot spontaneously display the appropriate emotions.

Emotion is inherent in all social interactions. But, however, emotional labor is defined very narrowly to point out organizational set up. Pugliesi (1999) argued that emotional labor takes place when customers and employees manage their emotion as a part of their job. To assure job demands people follow

certain rules during their interaction (Goffman, 1959). Ekman (1973) termed these rules, which need to follow for emotional display in specific situations as emotional display rules. Hochschild described a set of "feelings rules", by which people identify what is the appropriate behavior in a particular situation (Hochschild, 1983). It is important to remember that emotional rules are not only a bunch of standardized norms of behavior, but also refer how those emotions should be expressed publicly. Thus emotional display rules are assumed to be an important predictor of emotional labor. It is generally expected that an employee is required to display positive emotions and suppress negative emotions (Glomb & Tews, 2004; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). Most of the organization makes their own rules for their employees for handling their customers. Its may be written or verbal. Emotional display rules can be divided into three groups depending on the type of the emotions required by work occupations (Diefendorff, Richard & Creyle, 2006; Grandey, 2000; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). 'Integrative rules' involve expressing positive emotions such as smiling and being kind, which is most evident in service jobs like receptionists, flight attendant, nurses etc. Second sets of display rules are 'differential rules' which involve expression of negative emotions such as anger and fear.

Occupations like bill collectors, lawyer, and police officers follow these rules. Third set is of 'suppression rules', which demand to be neutral and control any type of emotional expressions evident in the work roles of judges and therapists. Most of the studies in the area of emotional labor literature concern with integrative rules, which involve expression of positive emotions and suppression of negative ones. It is mainly assumed that employees' perceptions of these rules affect their behaviors and expressions of feelings during their interactions with customers (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff, Richard & Croyle; 2006; Grandey, 2000, 2003; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Morris & Feldman; 1996; Zapf & Holz, 2006). According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) there is a significant correlation between perceptions of display rules, and both surface acting and deep acting dimensions of emotional labor. Later these findings were replicated by a number of researchers (Cheung & Tang, 2009; Grandey, 2003; Rubin et al., 2005; Totterdall & Holman, 2003; Yang & Chang, 2008). Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) found a significant relationship for only surface acting. Diefendorff, Richard, and Croyle (2006) looked at the issue from a different perspective and argued that employees' emotional labor will vary as a function of whether these rules are perceived as in

role requirements or extra- role requirements by employees. They suggested that if these display rules are perceived as in- role (formal) requirement then employees may be more likely to engage in emotional labor. On the other hand, if they are perceived it as an extra- role (informal) requirement, employees may not feel themselves be obliged to comply with these rules and may express whatever the emotion they like. Results provided partial support for their hypotheses indicating that expressing positive emotions were perceived as in- role requirements and resulted in higher amounts of customer interaction. On the other hand, suppression of negative feelings was considered to be an extra- role requirement and associated with low levels of customer interaction.

The practice of emotional labor is most evident either when a service transaction is going wrong, or when the customer is dissatisfied for any number of reasons. In most situations, the employee will remain calm and polite to the customer, though the customer will most likely be irritating or upsetting the employee. This is a form of self-control, suppressing negative emotions and evoking more positive emotions. Ashforth & Humphrey (1993) mentioned ten dimensions of emotions, such as trustworthiness, courtesy, approachability, and understanding etc.

They stated that the expectations of each dimension might change depending on the mood etc. of the customers. Thus it is possible that the customer may have unreal expectations of good service, and cannot be satisfied. In such situations, the feeling rules of the employee, while they may be correct, would not satisfy the customer.

Emotions as Commodity

Hochschild (1983) explained that employees display certain emotional expressions, which they just performed for pay. Here emotion thus becomes a 'commodity'. Through a process of "transmutation," or "commodification" emotion move from the private to the public domain and are supervised for payment (Hochschild, 1983). Sometimes organizations are sincerely recruiting and selecting those employees who are able to express required emotions in jobs like flight attendants, anchor, radio jockey, actors, receptionists etc. Again Hochschild (1983) added that use of emotional expression for commercial gain is quite dangerous because continually expressing fake emotions or suppressing genuine emotions just for commercial benefits and to fulfill required job demands are sometime affect employees natural emotional expressions, their natural behavior.

Antecedents of Emotional Labor

Regarding the antecedents of emotional labor, Hochschild (1983) suggested that there are situational and individual factors that influenced the way that individuals perform emotional labor. Antecedents of emotional labor can be discussed under two broad heads.

Job characteristics

Job characteristics refers to those phenomenon that are involved within the job, such as job autonomy, interactions with the customers, employees interpersonal relationships, environment, position in the organization etc (Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Oldham et al., 1976). According to Hochschild (1983) job characteristics such as numerous interactions with customers tend to increase service providers' emotional labor. Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) found that frequency and variety of emotional display were positively related to surface acting and deep acting whereas duration was positively related to deep acting. Diefendorff and colleagues (2005) reported that interaction characteristics were not significant predictors of surface acting but mostly related to deep acting. He stated that long term interactions may increase the chance of deep acting because with

time people adapt themselves to required emotional demand. In recent years, most of the research on emotional labor has focused on situational variables like frequency, duration, variety of emotional labor (Morris & Feldman, 1996, 1997; Jones, 1998), presence of display rules (Morris & Feldman, 1996), or other job variables such as display training, quality orientation (Kruml & Geddes, 2000), and job autonomy (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Jones, 1998; Kruml & Geddes, 2000) as antecedents of emotional labor.

Individual Characteristics

Personality trait is considered to be a very important antecedent of emotional labor (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Zapf & Holz, 2006). According to job-fit theory individuals always have a tendency to select such situations that allow the expression of their personality traits and values, and thus systematically create social environments that is constant with their dispositions (Ickes, Snyder, & Garcia, 1997). Ashkanasy (2002) said that personal dispositions determine much of how people think and behave. The personality traits frequently related to emotional labor are positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA). NA is positively related to surface acting and PA demonstrates a negative association with surface acting (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Diefendorff et al., 2005). Though

affectivity variables are largely irrelevant to deep acting (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Diefendorff et al., 2005), but recently Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) reported a positive relation between deep acting and PA and NA. In addition to personality trait gender and power status also influence emotional labor. According to Hochschild women are less powerful than men in terms of money, power, and status. So women subordinates need to show more emotional management to conform social norms. Again this social and economic positioning affects women's possibilities for identity formation and thus, they have had to be better actors. However, in characterizations of women as innately caring, and good in emotion management have been "mislabelled as 'natural,' rather than something of her own making" (Hochschild, 1983, p.167). A number of studies demonstrated that women tend to understand people's feelings better than men and as a result do more emotional labor both at work and at home (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Constanti & Gibbs, 2005; Erickson & Wharton, 1993; Kruml & Geddes, 2000). This is mainly because of their position in society. Here Kruml and Geddes (2000) added that employees with less experience are likely to experience more emotional labor.

Consequences of Emotional Labor

Research suggests significant influences of emotional labor on individual and organizational outcomes (Grandey, 2000, Pugh, 2001; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) describe emotional labor as a “double edge sword”. Following are the positive and negative consequences of emotional labor.

Previous researches pointed out some psychological damaging effects of emotional labor on employees. These negative consequences are emotional exhaustion (Morris & Feldman, 1996), emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983; Abraham, 1999; Botheridge & Grandey, 2002), inauthenticity (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), job dissatisfaction (Cote & Morgan, 2002), self alienation (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993) and burnout (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Botheridge and Grandey, 2002). Conscious displays of artificial emotion results in long-lasting stress which may cause hypertension, headache, stomach problem, heart disease, even exacerbate cancer (Mann, 2004). Deadrick and McAfee (2001) suggested that sometimes overfriendly behavior of employees causes unsocial reaction from customers either physically or verbally, which might create an uncomfortable essence of sexual harassment to the employees.

Performing emotional labor does not

merely lead to negative but also positive effects. According to Wharton (1993), workers who perform emotional labor report greater job satisfaction than workers who don't perform emotional labor. Various researchers suggested that display of appropriate emotions has an immediate or delayed impact on individual financial well being. According to Hochschild (1983) employee do emotional labor in terms of wage. Rafaeli and Sutton also added that the link between emotional labor and financial well-being is explicit when employees depend on tips from customers. Thus, the positive consequences of emotional labor include financial rewards (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987); increased satisfaction, security, and self-esteem (Strickland, 1992; Tolich, 1993; Wharton, 1993); increased self-efficacy, task effectiveness, self-expression and psychological wellbeing (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993); decreased stress (Conrad & Witte, 1994) and self-esteem (Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001), customer satisfaction (Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001), and even job satisfaction (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Wharton, 1993; Zapf & Holz, 2006). Pugliesi (1999) included that emotional labor is self-enhancing because it enables works to have control over their emotions. On the other hand emotional labour helps employees to maintain their relationship with customers (Godwyn, 2006) and thus

facilitates task effectiveness (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993).

As discussed above that emotional labor has negative as well as positive outcomes. If organizations select suitable employees who has good emotional control as per the job demands then negative outcomes of emotional labor could be reduced. Further through proper training of emotion regulation according to the job demands could be taught to the new hires. Though a number of research work has been done but still more research in this direction is needed for better understanding.

Conclusion

In the current scenario of service sector, emotional labor is the core of a service experience that influences customers' perception of service quality. Thus, it is very necessary for both the managers and employers to regulate or manage their emotions to ensure service quality. Organisations need to take care of employees' competencies to combat against the negative outcomes of emotional labour experienced by them in their respective professions. The HR departments need to be proactive in selecting people with pre-requisite skills and competencies such as high emotional intelligence, extroverts, open-minded, and conscientious people for managing emotional labour effectively. Regular competency assessment

programme organised by HR and training department of an organisation will help them to identify emotionally weak people and impart necessary skills through training to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. More empirical research will bring out more information to understand the concept and its applications in managements.

References :

- Abraham, R., Negative affectivity: Moderator confound in emotional dissonance-outcome relationships? *The Journal of Psychology*, 1999, p 133, pp 61-72.
- Albrecht, K., & Zemke, R., *Service America! Doing Business In the New Economy*, Dow Jones-Irwin, Homewood, Illinois, 1985, p 203.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Humphrey, R. H. . Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity. *Academy of Management Review*, 1993, p 18, pp 88-115.
- Ashforth, B., & Tomiuk, M., Emotional Labor and Authenticity: Views from Service Agents, In Fineman, S. *Emotion in Organizations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2000, pp. 184-203.
- Ashkanasy, N. M., Hartel, C. E. J, & Daus, C. S., Diversity and emotion: The new frontiers in organizational behavior research. *Journal of Management*, 2002, p 28, pp 307-338.
- Bowen, D. E., Siehl, C., & Schneider, B., A framework of analyzing customer service orientations in manufacturing.

- Academy of Management Review, 1989 p 14, pp 75-95.
- Brotheridge, C., & Grandey, A., Emotional labor and burnout: Comparing two perspectives of people work. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 2002, p 60, pp 17-39.
 - Brotheridge C.M., & Lee, R., Development and validation of the Emotional Labor Scale. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 2003, p 76, pp 365-379.
 - Cheung, F., & Tang, C., The influence of emotional intelligence and affectivity on emotional labor strategies at work. *Journal of Individual Differences*, 2009, p 30, pp 75-86.
 - Constanti, P., & Gibbs, P., Emotional labour and surplus value: the case of holiday raps. *Service Industries Journal*, 2005, p 25(1), pp 103-116.
 - Cote, S., & Morgan, L. M., A Longitudinal Analysis of the Association between Emotion Regulation, Job Satisfaction, and Intentions to Quit. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2002, p 23, pp 947-962.
 - Deadrick, D. L., & McAfee, R. B., Service with a smile: legal and emotional issues, *Journal of Quality Management*, 2001, p 6, pp 99-110.
 - Diefendorff, J., Croyle, M., & Gosserand, R., The Dimensionality and Antecedents of Emotional Labor Strategies. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 2005, p 66, pp 339-357.
 - Diefendorff, J., & Richard, E., Antecedents and consequences of emotional display rule perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2003, p 88, pp 284-294.
 - Diefendorff, J. M., Richard, E. M., & Croyle, M. H., Are Emotional Display Rules Formal Job Requirements? Examination of Employee and Supervisor Perceptions. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 2006, p 79, pp 273-298.
 - Ekman, P., Cross cultural studies of facial expression. In P. Ekman (Ed.), *Darwin and facial expressions: A century of research in review*, New York: Academic Press, 1973, pp. 169-222.
 - Erickson, R.J., & Wharton, A.S., Managing emotion on the job and at home: Understanding of consequences of multiple emotional roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 1993, p 18, pp 457-486.
 - Glomb, T.M., & Tews, M.J., Emotional Labor: A conceptualization and scale development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 2004, p 64, pp 1-23.
 - Godwyn, M., Using emotional labor to create and maintain relationships in service interactions. *Symbolic Interaction*, 2006, p 29, pp 487-506.
 - Goffman, E., *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1959.
 - Gosserand, R. H., & Diefendorff, J. M., Emotional Display Rules and Emotional Labor: The Moderating Role of Commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2005, p 90, pp 1256-1264.

- Grandey, A. A., Emotion regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 2000, p 5, pp 95-110.
- Grandey, A. A., When "The show must go on": Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. *Academy of Management Journal*, 2003, p 46, pp 88-96.
- Hochschild, A., *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Ickes, W., Snyder, M., & Garcia, S., Personality influences on the choice of situations. In R. Hogan, J. Johnson, & S. Briggs (Eds.), *Handbook of Personality Psychology*, 1997, pp. 165-195.
- Jones, J. R., An examination of the emotional labor construct and its effects on employee outcomes. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1998.
- Kruml, S.M., & Geddes, D., Exploring the dimensions of emotional labor: The heart of Hochschild's work. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 2000, p 14, pp 8-49.
- Mann, S., 'People-Work': emotional management, stress and coping. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 2004, p 32, pp 205-221.
- Morris, J. A., & Feldman, D. C., The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labor. *Academy of Management Review*, 1996, p 21, pp 986-1010.
- Morris, J. A., & Feldman, D. C., Managing emotions in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 1997, p 9, pp 257-274.
- Oldham, G. R., Hackman, J. R., & Pearce, J. L., Conditions under which employees respond positively to enrich work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1976, p 61, pp 395-403.
- Pugh, S. D., Service with a smile: Emotional contagion in the service encounter. *Academy of Management Journal*, 2001, p 44, pp 1018-1027.
- Pugliesi, K., The consequences of emotional labor: Effects on work stress, job satisfaction, and well being. *Motivation and Emotion*, 1999, p 23, pp 125-154.
- Rafaeli, A., & Sutton, R., Expression of emotion as part of the work role. *Academy of Management Review*, 1987, p 12, pp 23-37.
- Rubin, R. S., Tardino, V. M. S., Daus, C. S., & Munz, D. C., A reconceptualization of the emotional labor construct: On the development of a integrated theory of perceived emotional dissonance and emotional labor. In C. E. Hartel, W.J. Zerbe and N.M. Ashkanasy (Eds.), *Emotions in organizational behavior*, Mahwah, NJ, US: Erlbaum, 2005. pp. 189-211.
- Schanbroeck, J., & Jones, J. R., Antecedents of workplace emotional labor dimensions and moderators of their effects on physical symptoms. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2000, p 21, pp 163-183.

- Schneider, B., & Bowen, D. E., Employee and customer perceptions of service in banks: Replication and extension. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1985, p p 70, pp 423-433.
- Strickland, W., Institutional emotional norms and role satisfaction: Examination of a career wife population. *Sex Roles*, 1992, p 25, pp 423-439.
- Tsai, W. C., Determinants and consequences of employee displayed positive emotions. *Journal of Management*, 2001, p 27, pp 497-512.
- Tolich, M. B., Alienating and liberating emotions at work: Supermarket clerks performance of customer service. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 1993, p 22, pp 361-381.
- Totterdell, P., & Holman, D., Emotion regulation in customer service roles: Testing a model of emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 2003, p 8, pp 55-73.
- Wharton, A. S., The affective consequences of service work: Managing emotions on the job. *Work and Occupations*, 1993, p 20, pp 205-232.
- Yang, F. H., & Chang, C. C., Emotional labor, job satisfaction and organizational commitment amongst clinical nurses: a questionnaire survey. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 2008, p 45, pp 878-887.
- Zapf, D., Emotion work and psychological well-being: a review of the literature and some conceptual considerations. *Human Resource Management Review*, 2002, p 12(2), pp 237-268.
- Zapf, D., & Holz, M., On the Positive and Negative Effects of Emotion Work in Organizations. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2006, p 15, 128.